

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

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For Immediate Release

SAN DIEGO REAL ESTATE AGENT PLEADS GUILTY TO CONSPIRACY TO LAUNDER MONEY FOR DRUG TRAFFICKER

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 19, 2012

United States Attorney Laura E. Duffy announced that today real estate agent Marco Manuel Luis pled guilty before the Honorable Irma E. Gonzalez, United States District Court Judge to counts 16 and 25 of an indictment, charging Luis with felony counts of conspiracy to launder money, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1957 and 1956(h).

As part of his guilty plea, Marco Manuel Luis admitted that he was the real estate agent who facilitated the purchase of the residence located at 15702 Circo Diegueno, Rancho Santa Fe, for co-defendants Joshua John Hester and Kelsey Wiedenhoefer, both of whom have previously pled guilty and are pending sentencing. Marco Manuel Luis admitted that he engaged in monetary transactions through financial institutions, knowing that the transactions were derived from specified unlawful activities, namely bank fraud. He completed the loan application knowing that Joshua Hester was the true owner of that property, not Kelsey Wiedenhoefer, who appeared on the loan application. In addition, Marco Manuel Luis admitted that he intentionally

misrepresented Kelsey Wiedenhoefer's income, her employment record, and the source of down payment and monthly payments for the residence. As a result of the fraudulent loan application facilitated by Marco Manuel Luis, the banks subsequently caused escrow payment and wire transfers for the purchase of the property.

As to Count 25 of the indictment, Marco Manuel Luis admitted to Judge Gonzalez that he was the real estate agent who facilitated the purchase of property in Palomar Mountain for Joshua John Hester and Jay Hansen. Luis admitted that he knowingly prepared a fraudulent loan application in the name of Jay Hansen and misrepresented his income and employment records, and provided inaccurate verification of rent, as part of the submitted loan package. As a result of the false loan application, the banks subsequently caused escrow payment and wire transfers for the purchase of the property.

Marco Manuel Luis is scheduled for sentencing before Judge Gonzalez on July 16, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. He faces up to 20 years in custody, three years of supervised release, \$500,000 fine, and \$200 special assessment. Co-defendants Joshua John Hester, Kelsey Wiedenhoefer, and Jay Jansen are scheduled for sentencing on May 14, 2012 at 9:00 a.m., before Judge Gonzalez.

DEFENDANT **Case Number: 10cr2967BEN**

Marco Manuel Luis

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Count 16 - Conspiracy to Engage in Monetary Transactions, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1956(h) and 1957; Maximum penalties: 10 years' custody; \$500,000 fine, 3 years of supervised release.

Count 25 - Conspiracy to Engage in Monetary Transactions, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1956(h) and 1957; Maximum penalties: 10 years' custody; \$500,000 fine, 3 years of supervised release.

AGENCIES

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Drug Enforcement Administration
San Diego Narcotics Task Force
United States Marshals Service